

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 COTONO 00708 121024Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /011 W
-----080540 121726Z /43
R 121000Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 731

C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 708

FOR AF/W SMITH FROM CHARGE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OTRA, PINT, DM, US
SUBJ: ECONOMIC POLICY SEMINAR

REF: A. NAIROBI 7210 (NOTAL) B. COTONOU 699

1. REF A REQUESTS CONFIRMATION OF MY ATTENDANCE AT ECONOMIC POLICY SEMINAR IN NAIROBI. WHILE I WOULD WELCOME THE CHANCE TO GO TO EAST AFRICA, EMBASSY PERSONNEL SITUATION AND LOCAL POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS MAKE ME QUESTION WISDOM OF LEAVING AT THIS TIME. AS NOTED REF B, THERE APPEARS TO BE A POWER STRUGGLE GOING ON WITHIN THE BENINESE CABINET WITH PRESIDENT KEREKOU LOOKING FORHYEANS TO FORCE OUT HIS DEPUTY, LT. COL. OHOUENS. IN ADDITION TO ARRESTS OF DIRECTOR AND PRINCIPAL OFFICERS OF NATIONAL TRANSIT COMPANY SONATRAC, WE UNDERSTAND THAT THERE MAY BE FURTHER ARRESTS IN ATTEMPT TO BUILD UP DOSSIER OF OHOUENS' CORRUPTION. THE DETENTION OF BENNETT AND HAMZA APPEARS TO BE LINKED WITH THIS MOVE AGAINST OHOUENS. IF SITUATION REACHES FLASHPOINT, IT IS LIKELY TO DO SO WITHIN NEXT FEW WEEKS.

2. PERSONNEL SITUATION HERE, OF WHICH YOU ARE ALREADY AWARE, HAS NOT IMPROVED AND IS FURTHER COMPLICATED BY IMMINENT DEPARTURE OF CONSUL DICK ADAMS AND REPLACEMENT BY TDY OFFICER. THIS CHANGE WILL, FOR THE TIME BEING, FURTHER REDUCE OUR CAPACITY
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PAGE 02 COTONO 00708 121024Z

TO DEAL WITH A CRISIS. HAVING ALREADY MISSED ONE COUP ATTEMPT WHEN POLITICAL SITUATION WAS RELATIVELY STABLE, I WOULD NOT WANT TO BE ABSENT AT TIME WHEN INDICATORS SUGGEST TROUBLE MIGHT BREAK OUT. THOMPSON

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NNN

Message Attributes

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